The Chemical Officer's Critical Role in the Targeting Process

By Major Pete Lofy

The "targeting process" may seem like just a means of destroying an enemy target. However, if you ask the intelligence officer (G2/S2), he or she knows it's much more. The targeting process, or targeting, according to FM 101-5-1, *Operational Terms and Graphics*, is "the analysis of enemy situations relative to the commander's mission objectives, and capabilities at the commander's disposal, to identify and nominate specific vulnerabilities that, if exploited, will accomplish the commander's purpose…."

The staff chemical officer's (ChemO's) piece of the targeting process entails examining enemy courses of action (COAs) and friendly vulnerabilities to nuclear, biological, and chemical (NBC) attacks to identify areas of interest. The staff, including you, the ChemO, will use the results of the targeting and intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB) process to help analyze friendly COAs during the military decision-making process (MDMP). (See Captain John F. Fennell's article in the February 2002 issue of *CML Review*.) For the ChemO, the results of the targeting process will help focus the NBC reconnaissance, decontamination, and smoke efforts for the commander. The ChemO's ability to become part of this process (at all echelons) could make or break a unit on the battlefield.

In this article, I will explain the targeting process from the perspective of the ChemO and provide techniques for the officer to become an integral part of this critical process. Even though much of this article deals with the MDMP, I will focus on the aspects of targeting as it falls within the framework of the MDMP.

FM 6-20-10, *Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for the Targeting Process*, describes targeting as a "…complex and multidisciplined effort that requires coordinated interaction among many groups. These groups working together are referred to as the targeting team and include, but are not limited to, the fire support, intelligence, operations, and plans cells." This manual goes on to say that targeting "…must focus assets on enemy capabilities that could interfere with the achievement of friendly objectives."

Analyzing intelligence information

Though the ChemO and NBC-defense assets are not mentioned here specifically, the input of NBC personnel and factors into this process is vital—not only to the mission of destroying the enemy but also to the mission of surviving the conditions of the battlefield. FMs 101-5-1 and 6-20-10 address mainly destroying enemy targets, once identified. The portion of the targeting process the ChemO is concerned with comes within the framework of the IPB and collection management process, as described in FM 34-130, *Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield*.

FM 34-130 (pages 1-5, 9) describes the targeting process as it applies to target identification and collection management. The word "target" is not necessarily (for the ChemO's purpose) something to be destroyed, but rather it is something or some area to be observed and reported on. The presence or lack of a target will help drive the commander's decision-making process. The result of the targeting process is the election of named areas of interest (NAIs). The ChemO can use these NAIs to focus NBC defense and smoke operations.

Another by-product of the IPB and targeting process is the collection plan. This plan assigns NAIs to specific units for observation. These NAIs are monitored and reported on as instructed in the reconnaissance and security (R&S) plan.

A more focused guide to the IPB process, for the ChemO, is FM 3-14, *Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical (NBC)Vulnerability Analysis*. Chapter 1 further defines the ChemO's role in IPB, and it discusses NAIs and IPB products.

Thus far, I have focused on the doctrinal basis of the targeting process. Now I will show the targeting process using a scenario. This scenario will explore targeting from the ChemO's perspective and give some techniques on how to get you, the ChemO, involved in the overall MDMP.

At 0200 on 15 December, an NCO awakes you from a deep slumber and tells you the S2 is holding a targeting team meeting and the executive officer (XO) wants you there. The results of this meeting will support the defensive mission your unit is conducting in two days. As you walk into the tactical operations center (TOC) to the S2's area, you notice the S2, the fire support officer (FSO), and the supporting engineer officer are already there.

The S2 gives the targeting cell a quick update on the enemy situation and orients the group to the map he's using to build the intelligence picture. He elaborates on possible threat COAs. Then he identifies the NAIs that he's developed, based on some key terrain and road intersections. He says he thinks that these areas will be critical to the enemy's attack. His assistant is taking notes and assigns unit responsibility for NAIs, based on the location of the NAIs and the current array of friendly forces. This will become the basis for the collection or R&S plan. When the S2 completes his briefing, an engineer officer steps to the map and details current friendly mobility and countermobility operations and where he thinks the enemy will employ his mobility assets to defeat us. He then elects many of these areas for NAIs. This will ensure that someone is watching all of our obstacles and possible enemy breach points.

Now you give the group a quick update on the enemy's NBC capabilities. Putting yourself in the enemy's shoes, based on the S2's possible threat COAs, you visualize and vocalize where NBC strikes may occur. You know the disposition of friendly forces and basically how the unit will operate to defend the area. Both you and the S2 agree that for the enemy to be successful, he must locate and make the tank reserve ineffective. The enemy doesn't have to destroy the reserve, just take it out of the fight. You predict that he'll use persistent chemical agents on top of the reserve and along the reserve's ingress routes to neutralize the unit's combat effectiveness. You also surmise that the enemy may use nonpersistent agents along the front lines to disrupt our defensive synchronization.

Based on these assessments, you nominate several NAIs to be added to the list. You nominate critical road intersections along the reserve routes. You know that if these intersections get "slimed," the tankers will have to use other routes to support the defense. You also nominate the reserve assembly area and critical battle positions located forward. Finally, you nominate the unit's support area, knowing that any attack in or around that area will disrupt sustainment operations.

By the end of the meeting, the team has successfully identified and recorded the critical NAIs. The meeting breaks up and the staff officers go their separate ways. The S2 will use these critical NAIs to develop other IPB products, namely the event template. The FSO will take the NAIs (eventually targeted areas of interest [TAIs]) and begin developing artillery targets. Soon the staff will assemble to analyze friendly COAs, as proposed by the operations officer (S3). Your input to the IPB process and development of the NAIs and event template will be critical for this analysis.

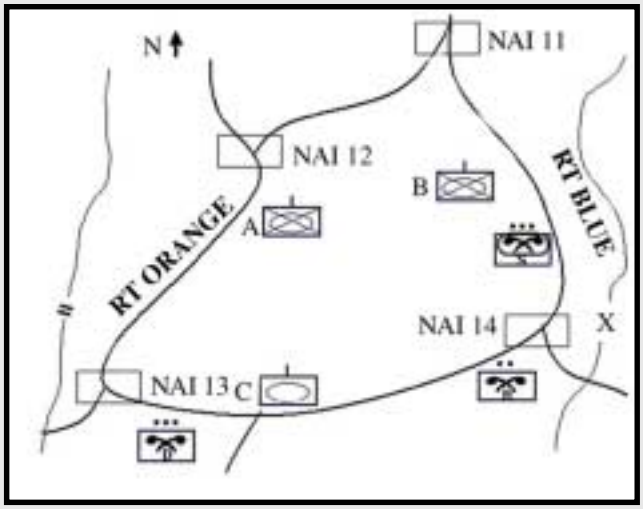
Before the COA analysis meeting, you return to your area to war-game use of the NBC assets available to you. You verify the unit's task organization and that you have an NBC reconnaissance squad (Fox), a decontamination platoon, and a smoke platoon available for your unit's use. You will now use the NAIs identified at the targeting meeting to mission these units.

You start with the reconnaissance squad. Since no organic unit is near NAI 14 (possible persistent chemical strike), you place the Foxes where they can observe and report on this NAI. This also allows them the freedom of maneuver to conduct reconnaissance missions elsewhere in your area of operations. You will soon develop specific instructions for them and place those instructions in the R&S plan and the operations order (OPORD).

Since the three most likely locations for a persistent chemical strike seem to be near or on the reserve, you decide to place the decontamination platoon near the locations. If the tank company is unable to have "eyes" on NAI 13, you could task the decontamination platoon to cover it. Your analysis of your COAs and war gaming should bring that out later. You will also mission them to establish decontamination sites and man-associated linkup locations. Specifically, you tell them to be prepared to conduct terrain decontamination at NAIs 13 and 14, the likely persistent strike locations (see figure).

Finally, you will task your smoke assets. The commander's guidance stated that we had to provide some force protection for resupply assets that will be using RT BLUE. He is concerned that the unit adjacent to us will not be able to stop dismounted enemy units from penetrating our sector from the east.

R & S Plan (extract)			
NAI	**Assigned**	**Monitor**	**Trigger**
11	B Company	T-72s	FSE
		Low-detonation artillery strike	Possible nonpersistent chemical
12	A Company	Low-detonation artillery strike	Possible nonpersistent chemical
13	C Company	Low-detonation artillery strike	Possible persistent chemical
14	1/1/53 CM (Fox)	Low-detonation artillery strike	Possible persistent chemical



Example of an R & S plan and associated operational "sketch"

Using your assessment of the enemy's capabilities and knowing friendly unit dispositions, you begin to plan smoke targets along RT BLUE. You will write into the OPORD, in the NBC Annex, that the smoke platoon will smoke along RT BLUE, from 0.5 kilometer forward of NAI 14 to the north for 1 kilometer. Limiting the advance of the smoke will ensure that B Company is not hampered in its observation efforts.

Following the MDMP, you are ready to give your input to the OPORD. You use the NAIs to write specific instructions for the subunits, to include supporting NBC assets. When the NBC leaders arrive for the OPORD brief, you provide them copies of the operational graphics, the OPORD, and the R&S plan. You elaborate on their responsibilities, as described in the NBC Annex. Finally, you ask each element's leader to conduct reconnaissance of the area and return for a brief back. It's then that you will finalize the locations of the NBC units, the smoke plan, the locations of decontamination sites, etc.

Early in the morning on the day of the defensive battle, an artillery strike occurs on NAI 13. C Company (tank) reports the strike, as they were tasked in the R&S matrix with watching the area. The report states,"Several artillery rounds impacted, with little or no explosions. No one was near the intersection, so no damage was done to any friendly forces." This report goes to the TOC via the operations and intelligence (O&I) net. The S2, who operates that net, immediately summons you, the ChemO. "Hey, ChemO, what do you make of this?" You immediately recognize this as the anticipated persistent nerve-agent attack. You inform the battle captain of your analysis and the S2 concurs. You immediately inform your NCO to contact the supporting NBC units and tell them to send one Fox to NAI 13 to verify the attack. Though this is not how Foxes are doctrinally employed, you decide to accept some risk so that one Fox can still monitor NAI 14. You also instruct the NCO to tell the decontamination platoon to prepare a squad for terrain decontamination of NAI 13 and vehicle decontamination of one Fox and possibly more vehicles. At the same time, the battle captain is informing units of the possible strike and telling them to stay clear. An MP squad moves forward to assist with traffic control. The battle captain also declares RT BLUE the primary route for resupply and movement forward of the reserve.

Sometime after dawn, the remaining Fox reports another "low-detonation" strike at NAI 14. Your war gaming tells you that the enemy wouldn't slime both routes with persistent chemical (p-chem), as this would take routes away from his attack. You know that the enemy will use p-chem strikes to shape the battlefield and is not likely to attack through his own p-chem strike. You immediately move the remaining Fox (near NAI 14) forward to investigate. You also inform the smoke platoon and B Company that a possible nonpersistent strike has occurred to their rear and that they should go to mission-oriented protective posture (MOPP) 4 gear. The Fox vehicle at NAI 14 confirms traces of GB nerve agent, validating your assessment.

When the enemy hits your unit's battle positions at 0800, your battalion is ready for the fight. All units are back to MOPP2 gear, except the decontamination and reconnaissance units cleaning up the p-chem strike at NAI 13. RT ORANGE should be open for business in about two hours. Your planning and assessment have paid off. You were able to focus friendly NBC assets using the NAIs established during the targeting meeting. Their placement on the battlefield led to quick responses and minimal time at elevated MOPP levels. The unit's mission is a success, and the enemy is defeated in detail.

Does this scenario seem impractical? It shouldn't be. The ChemO [you] must be an integral part of the staff MDMP and targeting process. Missing out on the MDMP, specifically the targeting process, means missing out on the opportunity to aid the commander in identifying his or her vulnerabilities and focusing NBC assets to support success on the battlefield. Is it always possible for you to be present at the targeting meeting? No, but synchronizing your efforts with the S2 early in the MDMP will accomplish nearly the same task. The targeting process does not have to be a stand-alone process. It can be, and is, rolled up in the overall MDMP. Where/when in the MDMP targeting occurs is up to your staff and MDMP facilitator.

To summarize, you should lend your expertise in matters dealing with NBC operations during the early stages of the MDMP. Specifically, your input to the targeting process will aid the commander in identifying unit weaknesses and arraying friendly forces to compensate for those weaknesses. Your input to targeting should be—

- An assessment of the enemy's NBC capabilities.
- An assessment of friendly units' vulnerabilities to an NBC attack, based on the current array of forces.
- COAs for enemy use of NBC capabilities.
- Specific locations for the employment of enemy NBC weapons.
- A nomination of NAIs based on the previous four items.

Upon completion of the targeting process and during the analysis of friendly COAs, you should be able to—

- Anticipate enemy COAs.
- Task-organize and array friendly NBC defense assets (reconnaissance/decontamination/smoke) to counter the threat COA.
- Give missions (task and purpose) to the friendly NBC defense assets, using the developed NAIs and other IPB products (like the R&S plan and the event template) as a basis for the plan.

At the completion of the MDMP, the staff produces an OPORD (or in some cases an OPLAN). You should provide appropriate products of the MDMP to the supporting NBC defense assets. They should be, at a minimum the—

- OPORD, or at least critical portions thereof. The critical portions must include the mission, commander's intent, subordinate unit tasks, support, and NBC annex.
- Operations overlay, including NAIs and critical routes.
- R&S plan, if NBC assets are involved (may be part of the OPORD).
- NBC reconnaissance, decontamination, and smoke plan and associated overlays (if not in the NBC Annex already).

A critical note to make here is that nowhere have we discussed chemical NAIs. Only the NAIs of the supported unit exist. There is no need to burden the executor of the R&S plan (often a high-speed cavalry scout) with several sets of NAIs. Chemical NAIs will almost always become lost in the fog of war. To talk to the combat soldier, you must be on his or her "net."

You now have (if you didn't before) a basis for your place, as the ChemO, in the targeting process. How involved you get in the process is often up to you or your boss. You should now know how to use the products of targeting to focus the assets available to you and influence the battle. If you are having doubts about how you fit in, see the S2 and XO. They should get you started in the direction to becoming an integral part of the combat staff.